

**STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE EDUCATION
OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

February 13, 2004
Indiana Department of Education
Indianapolis, Indiana

APPROVED

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMEBERS PRESENT:

Gary Bates, J. Lanier DeGrella, Cynthia Diamond, Karol Farrell, Terry Huser, Marcia Johnson, Brian Ketzner, Bret Lewis, John Nally, Elaine Scaife, David Schmidt (Chair), Julie Swaim, Jane Swiss, Glenn Tebbe, Steve Tilden, and Jim Hammond

DOE STAFF PRESENT:

Jennifer Campbell, John Hill, Bob Marra, Nancy Zemaitis

OTHERS PRESENT:

Brett Bollinger, Mary Custer, Roger Kryder, Judy Lam (Interpreter) and Wendy Yoder Nice (Interpreter), Jeff Stephens, Cheryl Thomas, Jim Durst, George Stailey

Approval of draft minutes from November 14, 2003, Council meeting

David Schmidt, the chair of the Advisory Council, called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. Council members reviewed the minutes from the November 14, 2003, meeting. The minutes were approved as presented.

Introduction of the new Council member and reappointment of two current members

Bob Marra began the meeting with an introduction of new Council member Karol Farrell. He also announced the reappointment of two current members, Marcia Johnson and Bret Lewis, and the resignation of Steve Cook as the Director of the Division of Disability, Aging, and Rehabilitative Services (DDARS). The new DDARS director or his/her designee will replace Steve on the Council.

Presentation and discussion of the Indiana School for the Blind's (ISB) comprehensive plan for special education and related services.

Jim Durst, Interim Superintendent of the Indiana School for the Blind, presented the school's comprehensive plan for special education and related services.

ISB educates approximately 177 students, ages 3-21, pre-kindergarten to 12th grade. All 177 students are identified as visually impaired (VI). There are 96 different eye conditions that the students have and many students have multiple eye conditions. Evaluations of students are not always valid and reliable. Many students' handicaps are degenerative in nature, and assessment has proved to be challenging.

41% of the students attend the school full-time and reside on campus. 32% of the students are day students. Some students attend ISB part-time and their local school part-time. ISB has a resource group that provides assistance to those students in hospitals or treatment centers part-time. The school also provides 24-hour health services from a psychologist, an ophthalmologist, and an optometrist.

ISB follows national, state, and local standards in place for the curriculum, and teaches the regular core curriculum. The school provides textbooks, supplies, equipment and materials to 1000 student, and follows up at the local school to assist the students in the classroom and local setting. The school provides summer school, remedial programs for 2nd to 12th grades, student training and employment programs.

ISB operates a Parent/Infant Program that incorporates home and agency intervention. Within this early childhood program exists programming for families and their children from birth through two years of age. The program has one Parent Infant Consultant who works with many First Step kids. The school also provides assessments of three to five year old children to determine their strengths and weaknesses, and to help out local schools.

ISB collaborates with Indiana School for the Deaf (ISD) with regard to the physical plant and laundry, and this has improved delegation of services for both schools.

ISB has a Lilly endowment grant. As a result of the grant, ISB students have laptop computers with voice synthesizers and Braille computers for the VI students. Technology has made all the difference in the world for ISB students with regard to opportunities to be gainfully employed.

The challenge ISB faces is addressing Braille, orientation and mobility, and assistive technology. The school believes it should expand its role in the state by teaching orientation and mobility to local school corporations and providing services to local schools as well.

A motion was made by Jim Hammond to approve the comprehensive plan. Terry Huser seconded motion. Council members voted to recommend approval of ISB's comprehensive plan.

Presentation and discussion of the Indiana School for the Deaf's (ISD) comprehensive plan for special education and related services.

George Stailey, the Superintendent of ISD, presented the school's comprehensive plan.

ISD serves children from birth to 21 years of age. All students being served by the school have a hearing impairment (HI) and are thereby eligible for special education and related services. Approximately 312 students, ages 3 to 21, are enrolled at this time.

ISD has around 32 students whose primary disability is not deafness. The school faces a lot of licensure issues with regard to providing qualified teachers to students with multiple disabilities. Only a few of the school's teachers have a second license in another disability. As teachers leave or retire, the school will have to look for teachers with an additional license.

Julie Swaim asked if ISD provides closed captioning to students. George Stailey replied that because the School is primarily an American Sign Language (ASL) school, ISD does not have the need to caption much. Also, closed captioning would require the purchase of equipment and that would be costly.

Julie Swaim noted that West Central Joint Services has the equipment and for those students who do not sign, closed captioning could be one service ISD could provide to them.

ISD refers young children identified with hearing losses to First Steps and gives them information about the Parent Infant Program.

ISD audiologists have had cochlear implant training, and ISD provides a cochlear implant program appropriate for preschool to elementary age children. ISD also provides mapping, which is when the electrodes of a cochlea implant are programmed and activated. As each electrode is activated, it must be adjusted and programmed into the speech processor. As the child develops skill in using the implant, further adjustments and reprogramming are required.

Bob Marra commented that there will be a push for what the teachers in the future will have to have compared to the teachers we have now—the teachers in the future will have to be highly qualified and there will be a big difference in education between the two. The Division of Exceptional Learners just formed a committee on licensure in order to address concerns with licensure and the practicality of it with regard to special education. The committee has not met yet due to conflicting schedules.

A motion was made by Terry Huser to recommend approval of the plan, and seconded by Elaine Scaife. Council members voted to recommend the plan be approved.

Presentation and discussion of the Northeast Indiana Special Education Cooperative's (NEISEC) revised comprehensive plan for special education and related services

Dr. Jeff Stephens, Superintendent of DeKalb County Eastern Community School District, began the presentation by stating that NEISEC is here today to ask the Advisory Council to add Tri-State University Middle College to the special education planning district. TSUMC (a local charter school) is a partnership between Tri-State University and the Metropolitan School District (MSD) of Steuben County. This partnership makes TSUMC the first charter school in the state of Indiana to gain membership in a public education cooperative. There are 11 superintendents and boards that have included TSUMC to the plan.

TSUMC is an early entrance program where a high school student is allowed to leave the school to take college classes and earn college credit. TSUMC provides educational experiences to high school age students who are first generation college students, skilled at-risk students (students at risk for not going to college unless helped and supported while there), and college-bound.

Roger Kryder, Director of NEISEC, announced that he will retire this year, and Mary Custer will be the new director as of July 1, 2004. He stated that he and Mary Custer endorse this program.

Mary Custer stated that the main focus of the presentation will be the TSUMC transition piece for all students, but especially for students with disabilities. Some students who are emotionally disabled, other health impaired, or autistic are very bright and can go to college but need some help with the transition. Adding TSUMC to the district will offer these students an in-house transition from high school to college, while the students are still in high school. This partnership gives kids a resource they have never had before.

Cheryl Thomas, the Middle College Coordinator of TSUMC discussed that TSUMC now offers special education services to any TSUMC student. TSUMC can now provide services to hearing-impaired

students. Students' teachers of record work with the Cooperative if the special needs student is attending TSUMC. TSUMC has lots of tutors, but does not offer any remedial classes.

Students who have passed their grade-appropriate Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (ISTEP) test may enroll in TSUMC.

Cheryl Thomas presented that TSUMC was chartered February 11, 2003, and has experienced one semester. TSUMC is not like any other charter school in that TSUMC does not claim any of their students and can service any type of student (home school or private school students) throughout four county schools and three states—Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana.

TSUMC students may take one course or they may begin a course of study that culminates in a degree. The students attend classes with Tri-State University students on the main campus, either part time or full time. Tri-State University professors or fully qualified adjunct professors teach the TSUMC courses. Most students are expected to attend a half-day of high school classes and a half-day of TSUMC classes. The student can attend TSUMC as early as the summer of their sophomore year. Some students may enroll full time in TSUMC. Currently, there are 17 students enrolled in TSUMC in the spring semester.

TSUMC curriculum is completely college bound and predominately an engineering school. A variety of courses can be taken, aside from a recommended Advanced Placement curriculum, so long as prerequisites are met.

TSUMC maximum cost is \$100 per credit hour, which includes book rental. Because TSUMC is a charter school, they receive funds to help reduce the tuition for high school students who enroll. If a student has a financial need, TSUMC can lower the cost of the class for the student. Most students who come to TSUMC do receive scholarships. Students not from Indiana pay a different price for classes.

Students who complete a TSUMC course with a grade of "C" or better will receive full credit on a Tri-State University transcript. The credit can be applied toward a Tri-State degree or may be transferred to another university (there's no guarantee that another college will accept TSUMC credit, but the credit is guaranteed at Tri-State). Successful completion of a course may also count as credit at the student's high school.

TSUMC does not offer classes online because of the concern with regard to the transfer of credits. And, the purpose of TSUMC is to get the kids on campus in order to do away with their fears concerning college.

Indiana is 17th in the nation with sending kids to college, however, we are 49th in the states with graduating kids with college degree, huge drop out rate for college.

Glenn Tebbe noted that the program seems well thought out and thought through, and moved to recommend approval of NEISEC's revised comprehensive plan.

Cynthia Diamond added that the opportunity for first generation students to get the help they need and give special education kids the opportunity to go to college is wonderful.

Mr. Tebbe's motion was seconded. Council members voted by a majority to recommend approval of the revised comprehensive plan.

State Improvement Grant Update

Brett Bollinger, John Hill, and Nancy Zemaitis presented the State Improvement Grant update.

Brett Bollinger began the presentation by informing Council members that he will retire from his position at New Albany on April 1st, and that he has agreed to be the Co-Director of the state improvement grant. He will be based out of Bloomington at IU and will continue to work with the department.

One of the provisions of the grant is to organize a management team that brings together stakeholders. Bret Lewis, Gary Bates, Marcia Johnson, and Rose Black were asked to be a on the management team, both in their capacity as an Advisory Council member, as well as their capacity as parents and/or professionals. The management team will also include, among others, representatives from DOE, state universities, and parent advocacy organizations, as well as individual teachers. A statewide Family Coordinator and three site coordinators will be hired to coordinate activities.

Nancy Zemaitis presented the data analysis section of the grant. Grant staff is looking at various data on the 293 school corporations to identify that schools could most benefit from assistance through the grant. Six schools will be identified for assistance over the five-year life of the grant. Among the data reviewed were: graduation rates, continuous improvement monitoring indicators, drop out rates, percentage of time special education students spend in general education, and the percentage of students in special education compared to the state average. Site selection criteria includes such factors as school location and size, as well as rural, and urban factors as part of the grant is to look at system-wide improvement and develop models and applied mechanisms to be replicated.

John Hill discussed that the U.S. Department of Education views the evaluation component of the grant as critical for internal evaluation. Grant money has been set aside in order to analyze data being gathered, and based on that data, determine if progress is being made. An Information Systems Coordinator will be hired to analyze the data. This person will generate reports to feed back to the state as well as the local school. In addition, the grant also includes funding to monitor grant effectiveness, performance, and the achievement of specified outcomes. The goals of the grant are: (1) to improve and enhance postsecondary education and employment outcomes for students with disabilities; (2) to improve early childhood programs and transitions; (3) to assist school-age students to successfully meet challenging academic and behavior standards; (4) to improve system-level partnerships and collaborations among families, schools, and community agencies; and (5) to improve the quantity and quality of personnel to meet students' needs.

Bob Marra commented that the Advisory Council looked at the early transition and adult transition and found the Division to be below expectations, so a grant was written in order to fix the transition problems. This grant will help the deficiency there. The big picture is that the money will not go far for very long.

Division Update

Bob Marra began the Division Update by discussing the regulations implementing No Child Left Behind, specifically as they relate to alternate assessments. In Indiana, the alternate assessment is known as ISTAR. NCLB regulations allow states to come up with two types of alternate assessments, and ISTAR is already set up to work for either alternate assessment. Becky Bowman is working on some of the

legal framework required in order to use ISTAR as the alternate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities for purposes of NCLB and calculating adequate yearly progress. One of the requirements for counting an alternate assessment using alternate achievement standards is that the student must be significantly cognitively disabled. Indiana has not yet defined this term. The proficient and advanced scores achieved on the alternate assessment and alternate standards by students with a significant cognitive disability will be counted as “passing” when calculating a school’s adequate yearly progress. However, there is a 1% cap on the number of alternate assessment proficient/advanced scores that can be counted. It also may be possible to use ISTAR as an alternate assessment for students who may have achieved Indiana’s academic standards, but for whom ISTEP is not a good measure or instrument. Bob is working with Ball State on a project on inter-rater reliability to demonstrate that the achievement shown on a student’s ISTEP can be similarly rated or demonstrated on ISTAR.

Bob Marra stated that some states don’t have academic standards for every grade level or haven’t developed an alternate assessment. Indiana has both K-12 academic standards and has had an alternate assessment available since 1997. One of the issues currently being addressed is determining which students should take ISTEP versus being assessed through ISTAR. Most students with disabilities do not need to be assessed through an alternate assessment but can participate in ISTEP with or without accommodations. The Department is developing a Peer Review Notebook, outlining Indiana’s “seamless” assessment system for review by the U.S. Department of Education. Bob is especially concerned about significantly impaired students and being able to demonstrate that learning is taking place and that progress is being made. Even the most significantly involved child can show progress, and that progress should be seen as a benefit to the school.

There is concern about the 1% cap that applies at the school corporation and state levels, especially related to where a student’s test scores are reported. The Department’s current practice is that the student’s test score is reported to the school building/corporation that provides the student’s instruction. The Department and the local school corporations want to ensure that the 1% cap doesn’t hurt programs or schools or the students being served. If we don’t keep students with significant cognitive disabilities in the accountability system, we’ll lose track of them. This is not just about academics but the skills kids need and ensuring that progress is made.

On the issue of teacher licensing, Bob explained that new emergency license requirements pose time problems and are cost prohibitive for the candidate. Under the new standards, every teacher will have to have a mild intervention license as one of his or her subsets. To have a really qualified person they will have to have both mild and intense intervention licensures.

Special education funding to schools will be as projected because the Division’s projections were on target. Although no additional funds have been added to the base, money has been added to allow for growth. The Adjusted Pupil Count (APC) indicates a 2.63% increase in the number of students with disabilities.

MSD of Pike Township and West Central Joint Services will be asking for approval of a revised comprehensive plan that brings Pike Township back into the West Central planning district. MSD of Pike Township wants to rejoin the West Central Joint Services because Pike felt that it did not have the money to make it on their own. The comprehensive plan approval request will be made at the next Advisory Council meeting.

Future Advisory Council meeting, 2003-2004 school year

There is one meeting left for the school year to be held on May 7, 2004, at the Omni Indianapolis North Hotel, 8181 North Shadeland Avenue.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.